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ABSTRACT

A discussion of life-long education, specifically a quest for it, is presented. The attitude of the student at 20 toward education and knowledge is described. A discussion of adult education in building a better world is focused upon. Political currents and the need for social change are also discussed. It is concluded that only an evolution in political thinking leading to a new view of the relationship between the authorities and the citizen can make it possible to set the objectives of a new kind of education, which will replace tradition. (CK)

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IN SEARCH OF LIFE-LONG EDUCATION

by

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This study, written at Unesco's request, will be a contribution to the work of the Interdisciplinary Symposium on Life-long Education organized by Unesco in Paris (Unesco House) from 25 September to 2 October 1972.

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IN SEARCH OF LIFE-LONG EDUCATION

What did we expect of life when we were twenty? We wanted, first of all, a life in the full sense and therefore one which not only brought us the satisfactions of living but offered what it is not unusual to hope for in addition - the opportunity to advance as far as possible along the path of knowledge, feeling art and poetry. We expected much more than this, however. We wanted a chance to contribute to the making of a better world, better for us, better for others and for mankind as a whole - how, indeed, could these aspirations be separated, seeing that it is neither desirable nor admissible, nor even realistic to create a haven of peace and joy for oneself when the rest of the world is dominated by fear and tyranny? The events which followed were unfortunately to prove us right.

These were the 'thirties, and civilization was already at crisis point which shows incidentally that the crisis we hear so much about today is not new.

We were in an extraordinary dilemma. On the one hand we were unable to identify with a society whose raisons d'être and values we could not accept; on the other hand, an even worse alternative, the triumph of racialism and other forms of irrationality, and a return to barbarism - had somehow to be avoided. For this reason, we could not stand aloof from the great battles which were looming ahead.

Our recipe for improving the structures and conditions of individual and social life was determinedly (and for many people exclusively) political. We thought of situations and problems in terms of power and more specifically in terms of the assumption of power. Since the obstacles lay in the structures and institutions of an outdated society where disorder and privilege were rife, the only solution we could see was to change society.

At that age, one imagines that everything will come right if only one can change the system and the institutions and alter the nature of government: the villains will be chased out and the incompetent swept aside; good and honest people will come into their own, put an end to corruption and govern the res publica conscientiously and with dedication. Justice will reign between individuals and between groups by virtue of new laws and new social relationships.

Experience and reflection upon that experience were soon to lead us into new paths of thought and action. None of us, indeed, doubted or could ever have doubted the important and fundamental rôle of political action. Political action provides the power and the means to overcome the forces of resistance, and when we look back at the most significant and valuable advances made by modern civilization, we are forced to admit that they result, not from wisdom and reason, but from the interplay of political interests and ambitions, demands and rebellions.

A certain number of us were rapidly induced to change course, however. While they still recognized the crucial importance of the forces at work in political attitudes and operations, they were obliged to take other factors into account in their perspective on the building of a better world. That perspective was now one of education, and more especially adult education.

We can probably all sympathize with such a change of outlook. Political action requires simplifications. It avoids the finer shades and does not go in for subtleties. There are the objectives to be reached and according to what

those objectives are, so people take sides, are friends or enemies, virtuous or villainous. Such a state of affairs is perhaps necessary and in any case inevitable. There are many people, perhaps the majority of mankind, who find this compartmentalization quite reassuring, but this was not the case with us. We could not help being aware of the complexity of human nature, the many contradictions, the mixture of reason and unreason, generosity and selfishness which goes into the make-up of every individual, whichever side he is on. The imperatives of the struggle might force us to take no notice of our true feelings for a while but they reappear with all their original force as soon as the opportunity arises.

It was perhaps because we had this kind of temperament, responsive both to the differences and to the universality of the human condition, that we gradually came to set ourselves objectives other than the objectives of the political struggle. Let us call it concern for the long term. However short a man's life may be, it is composed of numerous episodes and passes through many stages. It covers a certain length of time. We did not believe the ambition of a lifetime could be reduced to the attainment of a particular objective, however noble and vast it might be.

A final word about people's different temperaments, conceptions and outlooks. Some people concentrate their attention on the collective aspects of the human phenomenon. Their interest is monopolised by the masses, by the forces at work, by structures and institutions, and it is these that they consider important. The individual, in their view, tends to be absorbed into these vast patterns and constructs. Other people, on the contrary, are conscious primarily of human experience in its individual form. What interests them above all else is the single, unique, irreplaceable life-story of an individual, the awakening of a consciousness, the whole set of ways of thinking, feeling, and establishing relationships with himself and with the world which are peculiar to the individual, his own particular way of tackling and solving the problems he encounters both outside and within himself which is, and always will be, different from other people's ways.

In the final analysis, there is a natural division of functions between the approach which could be called sociological and the approach which, for want of a better term, might be called psychological or philosophical. It is obvious that neither of these approaches is inferior to the other and that each makes its own vital contribution to our knowledge of man. It is none the less true that the second approach is in a very special sense the approach of the educator, if one accepts that the aim of education is to form the mind, the body and the character, after all, where else do mind, body and character belong but within the restricted and yet limitless space of a particular individual in the context of his own being and becoming?

These considerations concerning different conceptions and interests would not in themselves have sufficed to set our feet firmly on the path of educational action, if they had not coincided with the conclusions to which we were driven by the events of the times in which we were living. There have been quiet and peaceful periods in man's history, at least if we take the history of only certain particular parts of the world, but, for us of the western world, such has not been our lot.

The ten years between 1935 and 1945 will probably be counted as among the most eventful and significant in history. For that brief space of time, everything was at stake, the fate of individuals and the collective fate of nations and

peoples alike. Even good and evil - as rarely happens in history - appeared clearly identified, sharply defined and separated: on the one hand the negation of two thousand years of efforts to bring mankind out of slavery and idolatry, on the other an alliance of men of all sorts and conditions, resolved to oppose the triumph of the Beast, the satanic alliance between folly, contempt for man and lust for power. Suffice it here to say that the combination of struggles and sacrifices, organizational might and technological innovation, and the fortunes of war tipped the balance at the end of these ten years in favour of what one must call Good when one thinks of what the fate and future of the world would have been had the other side won. In the first flush of victory and, in our case, of liberation, it seemed to many of our companions that the time had come to exploit to the full a situation which looked favourable for them to assume power, and that the major objective, which was to transform the institutions and structures, should take precedence over any other. The means by which control was to be seized were to depend on the kind of resistance encountered. Violence and dictatorship were naturally not ruled out, even if they were not systematically sought.

Why were we unable at the time to adopt this viewpoint? Today the reasons seem to us fairly clear and strong, but at the time things did not seem so clear. Rather we followed our instincts and we argued more from what we could not do than from what we could (among other things, we could not bring ourselves to share certain enthusiasms, certain transports of delight).

It did not appear obvious to us that the time was ripe for that radical change of régime, however desirable it might have seemed.

In fact, despite a number of not inconsiderable reforms and achievements and in spite of a steady increase in the national income which has benefited many sections of society, the powers of decision are vested in an increasingly small number of persons who are less and less subject to any checks, whether it be in finance, industry or politics. Far from having advanced along the road of freedom and responsibility, our right to be consulted on everything which constitutes the essence of public life seems circumscribed.

We had no idea at that time of the course which our society was to take between then and now. Others better equipped to read the future than ourselves were perhaps able to foresee the withering away of democratic institutions, morals and conceptions. Our "wisdom" at the time was limited to thinking that the revolution was not going to take place straight away - not one of those cases where one can derive much satisfaction from having been right.

From there, however, we arrived at certain conclusions and choices which were different from those of the trade unions or political organizations, which thought that the workers and their allies had to be kept in a state of constant readiness for decisive battles and in a militant, almost military frame of mind.

As is well known, the military spirit, whatever its origins, has a predominant tendency towards simplification. It cannot abide discussion or subjective interpretation. It manifests itself on the intellectual level by orders and instructions. No latitude or flexibility is allowed except in the restricted field of tactics and manoeuvre. It is an affirmation of the spirit of dogmatism, with all the short-term advantages that it implies and all the long-term havoc it wreaks. Militants can expect of their leaders devotion and readiness to take decisions, but can scarcely hope for accurate information from them as to situations and motives.

For the personal reasons explained above, we found it difficult to enlist under these colours; but, above all, we did not believe that this was the path by which that better life upon which our expectations and hopes were centred could be reached.

We attributed only a strictly qualified value to the merits of the military spirit even if we could appreciate why it was necessary for the time being. When, however, the military spirit persists after the circumstances which called it forth have ceased to obtain, it then loses all justification and becomes a positively adverse factor. It seemed to us that the leaders of the working class movement, while acting in all good faith and for reasons which were often noble, had not attempted to develop among the workers that free spirit of enquiry, that questioning, original outlook which is the hallmark both of the scientific attitude towards reality and action and of an adult conception of thought and existence. Inspired as they were by a mystical view of political action, their aim was regimentation of the masses, for which indoctrination is a natural prerequisite.

In these circumstances, what was left for us to do in our special position as intellectuals from, to some extent, bourgeois backgrounds? We had, as they say, thrown in our lot with the people but we did not share, for better for worse, the condition of the working class, and although we had enjoyed initial educational advantages, we were often lacking in human experience. The choice was not an easy one. We could always have kept quiet and toed the line, joining and swelling the ranks of those who, by their daily activity, though beset by the greatest difficulties, defend the workers' interests inch by inch.

Such is the call of service. It has its own grandeur and its own justification, even if it has to be paid for dearly by sacrifices which involve more than just time and energy and even if it means losing a part of one's soul. Although it is certainly understandable why some have chose this path, it is not surprising that there are some, too, who have had a rude awakening.

We did not have the courage to make this kind of sacrifice, nor did we think that this was the way to make the best use of our particular kind of ability and experience. We were educators by profession; this meant that twenty years of study, practice, meetings and contacts, reading and research had given us a certain ability in instructing, communicating ideas and acquiring languages of communication. Both by inclination and vocation, we had established and developed a constantly renewed dialogue and exchange with very varied milieux, and the war had given us, as it did so many intellectuals of our generation, the opportunity to live and work with people from social and working backgrounds very different from our own. With this preparation, we felt technically and morally ready to make our contribution to a kind of education in which this experience of exchange and communication among adults could be continued and deepened. When one has experienced and practised this kind of work, one acquires a taste for it which lasts the rest of one's life. But we had also begun to feel that the work of education among children and adolescents, however important and necessary, was only a kind of preparation and only an imperfect prefiguration of the real process of education, which only assumes its full meaning and scope when it takes place among equals, i.e. among people who have reached adulthood. We felt that the overall future of education was bound up with the establishment and functioning of this new order in training and education.

Circumstances favoured a venture of this kind: by a combination of the necessities and hazards of the struggle against the occupying forces, a particularly large group of young men found themselves all together in the south-eastern town where I was working at the time. They shared my outlook in varying degrees. Their origins and their educational, social and cultural backgrounds were very varied. There were fervent catholics and no less fervent communists, engineers, technicians, a few philosophers and a few literary people. There were very few who had already been in a job and apart from their particular experience of command and organization, most of them were "absolute beginners".

All in all, they were a mixture of exceptional maturity and great naïvety. It was, in fact, a time for discovering the world and oneself, a time of birth and rebirth which gave spirit, wings and imagination even to the least likely candidates for such an adventure and those most inclined by temperament to settle down comfortably within the system.

I believe that the vocation which most of them felt deep down was not really for education, but rather for technical matters and politics, as subsequent events proved. My purpose here, however, is not to write a history for which this is not the place. Suffice it to say that above and beyond their differences of background, job, interests, and philosophical and political creed, what united these young men was the fact that they had come into contact with education.

Most of them had taken part in the Resistance. They had acquired there that Resistance spirit which left its indelible mark on all whom it touched. The word Resistance of course covers a variety of factors, feelings and interests which were sometimes in conflict. Those who had experienced it in all its fullness, however, had found in it two basic aspirations: towards innovation, and towards human brotherhood. The taste for innovation was aroused by the impression that the world we had known was crumbling and that the traditional edifice of institutions, structures, beliefs, myths and relationships no longer had any sure foundation, not even in the minds and consciences of those who set themselves up as its guardians and defenders. It was perhaps an illusion but certainly only a semi-illusion: although it is true that no new world has arisen to take its place, the old world has continued to deteriorate and to lose credibility. We have abundant evidence of this every day, particularly spectacular explosions occur from time to time, erupting through the cracks in the system and showing that a new spirit is everywhere preparing to emerge.

There was something which was not a semi-illusion, however, and this, in the words of one of them was "the meeting of men". It is a long story fraught with significance and rich in episodes. To put it briefly, these young men on the threshold of their adult life had lived together for months on end. They had experienced spells of intense action in combat but also long weeks of inactivity and waiting. What happened then is what often happens in a situation of this kind. Individuals lifted out of the rut discover powers and abilities in themselves which routine or constraints had stifled and whose expression had been inhibited or repressed. New qualities then emerge in people hitherto dulled by their lives, temperaments assert themselves and vocations manifest themselves.

These three elements in combination - men with many and varied talents forming a team, an exhilarating historical setting, and a series of specific requests from active political and social circles - were to make possible an experiment in adult education almost unparalleled in France. I consider it one of my greatest good fortunes to have been associated with it and to have had a variety of responsibilities and functions. I was given the job of establishing and later running a worker's education centre, with premises in the labour exchange.

Our task was to help to train trade union leaders and, in a more general way, those destined to provide the leadership for the new structures of the society born of the Resistance. Our work thus had a very pronounced functional slant. It was imposed on us by circumstances and it also corresponded to a doctrine, a doctrine we had all to a greater or lesser extent worked out for ourselves during those recent years when we had had the time to think and, to a certain extent, to experiment. We had taken a close look at what had been previously achieved in so-called popular culture in France and were resolved to follow radically different paths.

It seemed to us that the weakness and consequently the fragility of most of the activities which had aroused the enthusiasm and energy of previous generations was largely due to errors of theory. Our predecessors had remained prisoners of a traditional conception of culture and were consequently doomed to failure. They thought of culture as a self-domain comprising the sum total of knowledge accumulated over the centuries and the sum total of experiences and achievements in the various sectors of science, art and literature. As it was a domain, one could enter it or remain outside. Once one entered, one could occupy more or less of its territory depending on chance, the type of education one had received, one's tastes and interests. Some specialized in history, others in geography others again in mathematics, in literature, etc.

If one adopts this "geographical" conception of culture, it is obvious that there is great inequality of opportunity for leading a "cultured" life. There are the cultural rich and the cultural poor, the privileged and the victims, the initiates and the uninitiated; there are those who have had the benefit of a thorough school and university education and who have learned the methods and languages of communication, and those whose intellectual materials and tools are limited.

One can understand why under these circumstances, the educators who devoted themselves to the service of the people in successive generations had one major objective: to reduce inequality and open wide the doors and broaden the paths of access to culture. They thus set themselves up as the distributors of an elaborate and, to a greater or lesser extent, codified system of knowledge. It will not be difficult to guess the reasons for, and the basis of, our critical attitude. Whilst acknowledging that their intentions were honourable and noble, we could see a number of mistakes and fallacies in this kind of approach: mistakes as to the nature of knowledge and culture and the fallacy of presenting specific models of cultural experience dating from a particular historical period as culture itself and, in this particular case, imposing patterns of life, perception and sensibility elaborated over generations by the bourgeoisie on other sections of society. The latter either could not recognize themselves in the interpretations given them and thus remained on the sidelines or, if they happened to be allured and tempted by certain aspects, could pick up nothing more than the crumbs from the great cultural feast. In a word, this attempt to introduce workers to culture was flawed in its very conception and was doomed to failure.

We were motivated by quite a different conception of culture and cultural life. We tried to cut out a priori references to a ready-made, cut-and-dried culture and were convinced that the only service an educator can do for anyone else, particularly an adult, is to give him the tools and put him in situations where, on the basis of his own station in society, his own daily experiences, struggles, successes and setbacks, he is able to build up his own system of knowledge, to think things through on his own and, by degrees, to take possession of the various elements of his personality, fill them out and give them form and

expression. In other words, the ability to communicate, to stand up for oneself and to participate in the common struggles becomes, according to this view, as important as the ability to learn, whether to satisfy curiosity or to increase the effectiveness of one's work or trade union or political activity. Thus we came to attribute to being, in all its aspects and in all its many dimensions, the paramount importance it deserves and to set the acquirement of culture in its rightful place, which is the purely relative one of becoming meaningful only when integrated into a living, fighting being and into a series of experiences of life, each one individual and unique.

How far did we go in applying these principles? We did not, of course, carry them to their conclusions. To establish a coherent system of methods would have needed much greater knowledge and ability than we possessed. Nevertheless, throughout our experiment at the centre, we attempted to be as "functional" as possible. Rich in our team's many talents and abilities, we carried out a study on the current and specific needs of the workers we were dealing with. They, of course, participated in this identification process. It was natural that they wanted to be taught about business management and labour law. We added to this a history of the working class movement which, as we know, is usually left out of school syllabuses. Where we perhaps showed most originality and imagination, however, was in the field of intellectual training. Thanks to teamwork in which technicians, engineers, ordinary workers, professional teachers and some philosophy specialists took part, we elaborated a method to which we gave the programmatic name of "entraînement mental" - mental training, in which one can immediately spot the reference to other forms of training, whether sport or vocational. For present purposes let us merely say that this method tried to develop certain habits and reflexes of intellectual activity, starting out from an analysis of the main mental operations involved in the various phases of mental activity and deliberately ignoring traditional divisions between the various subjects. Thus, to take just one example; and without going into details about the various parts of the training, the operation of classifying was thus illustrated and taught with the help of elements borrowed either from current speech or the organization of work, or from the classification of the sciences. The essential thing was, and still is wherever this method continues to be used, to demonstrate the place, rôle and importance of the "classification" operation in all walks of life, home and private life as well as working and social life, and to provide, by a series of suitable exercises, the means and the tools by which to carry it out. It was thus an original combination of living logic and living rhetoric, closely bound and linked to the needs and circumstances of action. Needless to say, since this method will develop the individual's powers of judgement and reflection and since it is based on a philosophy of self-sufficiency, it has enemies as well as friends, particularly in political circles which, as they do not share this liking for intellectual independence, have greater confidence in formal education and its traditions and methods for the training of minds.

Worker education proper was only part of our team's activity, however. A cultural centre was set up at the same time and this too, using different means and by other kinds of activity, tried to meet the needs of a developing culture, integrating the various elements contributing to modern society, beginning with the work of men and the various attainments of modern art. To establish a fruitful dialogue between the various departments as well as between teachers and taught, an inter-departmental centre was set up. An association was formed to co-ordinate the different parts of this work, which adopted the name of "Peuple et Culture". The association soon found that its work met a national need and it was not long before the group forsook its provincial surroundings and, as

they say, "went up to Paris". It has now been carrying on its activity from Paris with varying degrees of success for a quarter of a century, alongside other bodies concerned with popular culture but maintaining its originality of approach to problems and its inventiveness in the fields of theory and methods.

Over the years we issued a number of publications which have lost nothing of their vigour and relevance, in particular the manifesto of Peuple et Culture and a textbook on mental training. The institutions we established were short-lived, however. They could not survive when the spirit of the Resistance ran out, when certain political ultimatums were delivered and when the team, except for a hard core of militants who have settled in Paris and now work at national level, dispersed to return to their own interests.

The bulk of what I have accomplished in adult education since that time, in almost thirty years of practical experience and of thinking back on and forward from that experience, I owe to that Peuple et Culture experiment which provided each of us with a fund of ideas and lines of approach on which we are still largely drawing. I was personally unable to adopt the political courses of action chosed by my comrades in the Movement. I had to leave the team and subsequently began an international career which was interrupted only briefly for national activities. During that time, Peuple et Culture lived on and fought on. One could talk endlessly about the many and varied contributions made by this handful of men not only to popular culture but to the development of the country's intellectual life. It was within that circle, for example, that the concepts of cultural policy and of the sociology of leisure, concepts so full of meaning and promise, came to maturity. Peuple et Culture has never ceased to play a pioneering rôle and to be in the forefront of the fight to create a culture for our times.

All the same, we are forced to admit that we have not succeeded in our undertaking and that our expectations have not been fulfilled. What was our ambition after all? As we said at the beginning, it was to help to make a better life, and for all the reasons we have set out, our hope lay in education. We staked our faith on education, but what is the position today in France and in most of the other countries which we have been able to study or about which we have verifiable information? We are, indeed, forced to admit that adult education still exists only in a rudimentary state.

Even the most optimistic observers of the educational scene in our countries have to admit that adult education cuts a poor figure both in itself and in comparison with the other sectors of education. Although all children go willy-nilly through the educational mill and the period of schooling is steadily getting longer, how many people, after their school days, however long, are over, continue to study, to educate themselves, to keep themselves regularly informed and to develop, by means of continuous, organized efforts, the skills, gifts and talents with which they set out? Although it is impossible to give even approximate figures since the great variety of "unofficial" forms of education have to be taken into account, one can say without fear of contradiction that such people represent a marginal fringe group in the community.

Of course, there are important areas of national life where one may note with satisfaction that progress has been made. This is true of vocational training. The rapid progress of technology and the resultant phenomena of geographical and social mobility and the threat of unemployment have produced a situation which is favourable for educational action. In this field, the demand for and

supply of training continue to grow; furthermore, legislation, administrative measures and funds exist in this sector, thus making it possible to foresee that the gap between needs and resources will be narrowed in the relatively near future.

But what about the rest? What progress can we note in the training of the intellect, of the sensibility, in aesthetic and above all in political and social education? There are certain active nuclei whose work merits the closest attention; but what about the masses who are, in the final analysis, the ones who matter, the ones who make up a community, a people, a nation or a civilization? It would be better not to dwell too long on the inertia and passivity one can see for fear of appearing too pessimistic and too unfair towards the remarkable things which are being accomplished in the various sectors. What is certain is that the bodies which have or have taken on the responsibility for organizing this aspect of the country's political and cultural life function sluggishly, have only a surface contact with society and represent but a minor force in relation to the other structures of social life such as political parties, churches, trade unions, universities, professional associations and pressure groups.

What are the reasons for this weakness? How is it that adult education, in spite of its importance for the lives of individuals and society, has not managed to establish itself and take strong root in our countries? This is the vital question which those among us for whom ephemeral successes and small achievements are not enough have been unable to evade.

There is a great temptation to blame the apathy and sometimes even hostility of the public authorities. Indeed, this factor cannot be ignored, since all authorities are, by nature distrustful of anything which might lead to what they would call an unco-operative attitude, in other words a critical attitude and a lack of respect for the Establishment. This factor must certainly be neither ignored nor minimized but it occupies only a secondary place and plays only a secondary part in an overall analysis of the problem. To place responsibility for shortcomings on people who, by nature and by virtue of their functions have no incentive or reason to change a situation which is, or so they think, favourable to them, is pointless and gets us nowhere. The analysis must thus be taken further and we must look towards the "interested parties" in the legal sense, i.e. towards the adults themselves. Here we are forced to a number of conclusions which lead on one from another. The first is that there is one essential reason why adult education fails to make its presence felt and why it lacks vigour, which is that it does not correspond to a desire, or at least to a determination. Child education has such an important place in national life everywhere in the world because it is a response to a universal aspiration. Every adult, whatever his degree of development and his level of awareness, knows and understands the importance of training and education for his children. The desire for more schools, more teachers and a wider access to education finds expression in demands of a political nature. The authorities, for their part, have confidence in the school as a source of wealth, as a factor for national stability and integration and as the essential upholder of right behaviour and right thinking, and since public and private motivations thus coincide, school education is founded on a rock and has an irrepressible vitality. If the indifference of the authorities towards adult education is to be replaced by an active interest and if it is to be given adequate structures and institutions, and sufficient human and financial resources, it must demand, if not by the whole of society, at least by important and influential sectors of it. There can be no vigorous and flourishing adult education until it is underpinned and supported by a collective will.

But we must carry this train of thought further. Why is it that adults who as individuals and as members of different social groups are in great need of knowledge and regular information, of training for their faculties of comprehension, feeling and communication, only want education for other people, particularly those in their charge, their children, but for their own part turn away from anything like an effort in this direction. Why this coolness and frequently even hostility towards any educational enterprise? How can one avoid the obvious conclusion that, for the majority of them, their experience of education has not been a happy one?

In fact, we who are involved in adult education are led by our analyses and thoughts to conclude that the weakness of our enterprise is not fortuitous, and that neither is it due to some ill-defined lethargy or inertia to which humans fall prey when they reach adulthood, but that it is the result of a series of frustrations, traumatic experiences and missed opportunities. It seems obvious that if an adult loses interest in his education and, apart from exceptional cases, turns aside from both the highways and the by-ways of education, it is because at an impressionable age, in childhood or adolescence, he did not find what he wanted and expected in the type of education offered to him or imposed on him. We had to accept the obvious fact that once the pressures and obligations exerted by the authorities and the family or by the need to learn a trade were removed, only a small number of enthusiastic amateurs made any sustained effort to study and learn. What other conclusion can be drawn from all these observed facts if not that education as it now functions is on the wrong track and causes a wastage of energy, enthusiasm and resources almost without parallel in any other sector of national life except, of course, military programmes and prestige projects.

As adult educators, we could not but turn our eyes and our attention to education as a whole. It was a logical development of what we were doing: otherwise would have been condemning ourselves to accept an absurdity, i.e. to find ourselves confronted with adults left in a state of shock, cut off from the normal sources of their creativity, alienated from the natural state of the mind and the heart which is never to stop questioning the world and working for their own perfection. For some years, therefore while still carrying on our specific work for adults, we have been more and more urgently drawn to consider the whole of education and the succession and inter-relation of its various stages. When we speak of life-long education, it is the unity and totality of the educational process which we have constantly in mind.

It will be seen that we by no means identify life-long education with adult education as, to our regret, is so often done. Why, after all, invent a new name for something already well enough designated and identified by the term already used? Why add yet another term, albeit with different shades of meaning, to the already lengthy list of expressions like po[illegible]lar education or culture, mass education, community development, basic edu[illegible]tion, etc. There is enough confusion already. What we mean by life-long education is a series of very specific ideas, experiments and achievements, in other words, education in the full sense of the word, in all its aspects and dimensions, in its uninterrupted development from the first moments of life to the very last and in the close, organic interconnexion between the various points and successive phases in its development.

This in no way means that adult education is losing ground and is becoming less important; on the contrary it thus acquires a heightened significance and prominence. Firstly, the more adults there are requiring education, the more

naturally will they feel the need to form associations and to receive help and guidance from institutions and people specializing in this kind of activity. But this is not all: the success of every undertaking carried on under the banner and following the path of life-long education quite clearly depends on the existence of a vast network of educational and cultural facilities for adults. No reform of education at any given level "A" is in fact possible nor can it be envisaged unless education continues at level "B", and so on. If individuals are left to their own devices once they leave school or university and do not find in their immediate environment the tools and structures for a living education adapted to life in its continual evolution, it is clear that there can be no escape from encyclopedism, i.e. the unavoidable although anti-educational and irrational need to stock-pile knowledge and accumulate ready-made answers to questions which have never seriously been asked. It will be seen that the concept of life-long education is circular: there can only be life-long education worthy of the name of people receive in childhood a fair and rational education, based on life's needs and enlightened by the findings and data of sociology, psychology, and physical and mental hygiene; but an education of this kind cannot be achieved unless adult education itself is firmly established in peoples' minds and in the way of life, and has a solid institutional basis.

Even now, however, the contribution made by adult education to education as a whole is a decisive and irreplaceable one. As we have seen, it was in adult education, beginning with a series of analyses of the nature, circumstances and progress of the work in hand and of the obstacles encountered, that the theory and, to some extent, the practice of life-long education were worked out and are continuing to be worked out. Adult education has also made a specific and direct contribution to the world of education in the realm of curricula and activities. The real educational innovations of our time have been introduced in adult education. It was here that group work replaced the exclusive use of formal lectures, lessons and exercises. Adult education, except where it is only a substitute for and complement to school education, shuns the idea of marks, positions, punishments and rewards and all that clutter from a bygone age which our schools still harbour. Education shows through here in its true light as a process of exchange and dialogue in which each participates and contributes according to what he is, to his specific acquirements and talents, and not according to set patterns. There is no selection, which is a brutal and wasteful process, nor are there any examinations and certificates which distort the teaching process and impair the normal development of the personality through fear of failure. In adult education, there is no hierarchy of methods and it is no mere chance that the less orthodox methods of education, visual methods in particular, have long been accepted in adult education institutions. In a word, it is education in freedom, for freedom and by freedom, at least wherever adult education is given its head and does not have alien patterns imposed on it for professional, political or partisan reasons.

The question nevertheless remains, how can such necessary changes be made? Where are the forces necessary to overcome obstacles and inertia? Is it not an unbreakable vicious circle, since those responsible for taking action on education are precisely the ones in whose interest it is to see that it does not change, those who maintain the traditional patterns which have made them what they are and which bolster up their position and their prestige? We thus come down to the root of the problem and it is essentially a political one. Only an evolution in political thinking and a new view of the relationship between the authorities and the citizen, between governing and governed, between the administrators and those administered can make it possible to set the objectives of a new kind of education

and give the strength needed to put creative innovation in the place of retrograde tradition. This does not prevent us either from criticizing or from seeking particular solutions to particular problems. In the long term, however, there will be no solution to the problem of a better life except in a society imbued through and through with the principle of life-long education and in an education closely bound up with the advances and achievements of society.

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on Adult Education